

Submitted May 11, 2011

Approved As of

Date May 11, 2011

MINUTES OF THE ROCKVILLE PLANNING COMMISSION
MEETING NO. 9-2011
Wednesday, April 13, 2011

The City of Rockville Planning Commission convened in regular session in the Mayor and Council Chambers at 7:00 p.m., Wednesday, April 13, 2011.

PRESENT
John Tyner, Chair
Jerry Callistein
Kathleen Cook
Don Hadley
Kate Ostell
Dion Trahan

Absent: David Hill

Present: Mayor Marcuccio
Councilmember Pierzchala
Andrew Gunning, Assistant Director of CPDS
Marcy Waxman, Senior Assistant City Attorney
Jim Wasilak, Chief of Planning
Bobby Ray, Principal Planner
David Levy, Chief of Long-Range Planning
Cindy Kebba, Planner III
Jeremy Hurlbutt, Planner III
Mayra Bayonet, Planner III
Margaret Hall, Planner II
Nicole Walters, Planner II
Manisha Tewari, Planner II
Elise Cary, Assistant City Forester
Rebecca Torma, Transportation Planner
Tyler Tansing, Commission Secretary

REVIEW AND ACTION

Annexation Petition ANX2011-00141, Mayor and Council - to annex 10 parcels located at 5611 Halpine Road; 5620, 5622, 5624, 5627 and 5629 Pier Drive; 12900, 12902, 12904 and 12906 Twinbrook Parkway, to be placed in the R-60 Zone.

Ms. Tewari presented the staff report. Ms. Tewari stated that the record was closed on March 30th. No testimony has been received. The Mayor and Council will hold a public hearing on June 6, 2011.

In response to Commissioner Tyner, Ms. Tewari stated that she has heard from property owners, who had specific questions, which staff has answered. She noted that people, generally, provided positive response to the proposed annexation.

Commissioner Callisten moved, seconded by Commissioner Hadley to recommend approval of Annexation Petition ANX2011-00141 to the Mayor and Council. The motion passed on a vote of 6-0. Commissioner Hill was absent.

Level 2 Site Plan STP2010-00037, First Baptist Church - to construct a 34,414 square foot two story building addition at 55 Adclare Road.

Ms. Walters presented the staff report.

The Commission and staff discussed peak hour traffic/intersections; deferral request for bicycle parking, additional vehicular parking; acceptable levels of traffic service; Sunday peak hour traffic; creating a left turn from the church driveway to Adclare Road; the proposed sidewalk through the applicant's property to Roxboro Road, which was in the original application; and the criteria used to determine whether this application was in compliance with the Master Plan.

Reverend Bob Schmidt, Senior Pastor, presented the applicant's request. Reverend Schmidt stated that the proposed addition is a result of a growing membership and would provide educational classrooms, administrative offices, community space, a gymnasium, as well as expand the church's parking lot, which would meet the needs of the community. He noted that the church has changed its plans because of the lower cost to build a larger addition; also discussed were notification to the community, and the reason for requesting bicycle parking deferral.

Toby Wilson, Engineer with Macris, Hendricks and Glascock, answered questions regarding the previously approved use permit. Reverend Schmidt also responded to questions concerning traffic generated by the expansion; staggered traffic; and; additional meetings; church functions; and, rental of the gymnasium.

The following citizen testified:

Ned Dietrick, 714 Brent Road, stated that he is a member of First Baptist Church. He stated that having a left turn only onto Adclaire would be a problem and he explained the reason.

The Commission further discussed its concern regarding traffic, whether the size of the expansion

would be a detriment to the neighborhood; having some type of traffic control, such as a traffic light at Adclare Road.

Commissioner Ostell moved, seconded by Commissioner Callistein to approve Level 2 Site Plan STP2010-00037, First Baptist Church per staff recommendations and subject to Conditions 9 and 10 regarding forestry as well as the findings. The motion passed on a vote of 6-0. Commissioner Hill was absent.

Parking Reduction Request, Rockville II Limited Partnership - a request to reduce the number of required parking spaces for projects within the MXD, MXCD, MXE, MXNC and PD Zones subject to specific criteria. The subject property is located within the PD Zone (PD-MC, Metro Center).

Mr. Ray presented the staff report. Mr. Ray stated that this request is for the Rockville Metro Plaza, which is located at the northwest corner of Rockville Pike and East Middle Lane.

The Commission discussed concerns regarding the parking agreement with the City and the potential tenant of the Phase II development; what would happen if the parking levels increase and all the parking garages fill up; parking reduction numbers and monthly fees; and what would be the impact on the parking lot planned for a hotel.

Barbara Sears, Attorney with Linowes and Blocher, presented the applicant's request.

Clayton Foulger with Foulger-Pratt provided an update on Phase II of his project. He also answered questions regarding the number of parking stalls on and off-site; expected occupancy of the building; shared-use parking concept; percentage of employees who would use transit to work; and use of City parking garage for available parking to the project.

Dan Slear, Senior Director of Real Estate with Choice Hotels International, discussed the parking situation and stated that Choice did perform a survey of their employees to answer questions regarding what aspects of real estate would be of utmost value to them when exploring different locations for Choice's corporate office.

Mr. Foulger and one of his representatives answered questions regarding parking data and garage utilization and why they are requesting a parking reduction in the Town Center.

Councilmember Pierchala answered a few questions on the parking numbers. He stated that the City is looking at this project as an increase in City revenue. The City is losing money due to the fact that people are not parking in the garages.

The Commission further discussed people driving versus people taking public transportation to work; and the fact that if this office building is built, the City will have actual hard data on the parking issue.

Commissioner Ostell moved, seconded by Commissioner Hadley to approve Parking Reduction

Request, Rockville II Limited Partnership as submitted and based on the findings of fact. The motion passed on a vote of 6-0. Commissioner Hill was absent.

Request for Street Change - at the request of Choice Hotels International, a proposal has been made to change East Middle Lane to Choice Hotel Lane.

Mr. Gunning stated this decision by Choice Hotels to bring their corporate headquarters to Town Center is very important to the City. He noted that staff did get confirmation from Police Chief Treschuck regarding public safety as it relates to the street name change. Nearby businesses were notified and there were no objections to the request.

Ms. Hall presented the staff report.

Dan Slear with Choice Hotels International presented the street name request. He provided background history of Choice Hotels International. Mr. Slear pointed out that when Choice Hotels was searching for a location for their headquarters office, they found that in the City of Rockville was an emerging Town Center and felt that Choice Hotels could be a catalyst to help the Town Center to grow and then be able to be recognized as the largest office employer, outside of the government, as well as an anchor tenant in the City. Mr. Slear stated that it was suggested to them that changing East Middle Lane to Choice Hotels Lane would give them recognition as a major anchor in the community. Mr. Slear explained why they need the recognition in the City.

Sally Sternbach, Executive Director of Rockville Economic Development, Inc, also known as REDI, spoke about Choice Hotels and how Choice Hotels would be a major asset to the City during these difficult economic times. She said she heard earlier regarding the issue of changing the name of East Middle Lane due to its history. Ms. Sternbach further explained.

Ms. Sternbach read a letter from Robin McBride, Regional Vice President for the Federal Realty Investment Trust, who is in support of the name change.

Commissioner Hadley asked Ms. Sternbach whether there was any consideration given to alternatives in changing the name of the street. Ms. Sternbach replied that she was not privy to many of the discussions, but, the ability of having a postal address and a street address where people can easily find the business, is the premier way to brand one's business as part of a community.

Commissioner Ostell asked what would happen to street name if Choice Hotels were to change its name, move, or go out of business. Lea Madison with Choice Hotels International explained.

The following citizens spoke in support of the name change:

1. Clayton Foulger
2. Councilmember Pierchala

The following citizens spoke in opposition to the name change request:

1. Anita Neal Powell, President of Lincoln park Historical Foundation
2. Mary van Balgooy, Peerless Rockville

Questions were asked regarding notification of the street name request.

3. Steve Fisher, citizen, spoke about Choice Hotels and whether it would consider changing its name. Mr. Fisher stated that he would like to see East Middle Lane retain its name.

Mayor Marcuccio spoke about Choice Hotels and its history.

Councilmember Pierchala spoke again in support of the name change request.

After listening to the testimony, Dan Slears requested deferral of the name change request and asked to discuss and confer.

4. Brigitta Mullican, Lewis Avenue spoke in opposition.

Ms. Madison also requested to defer the street name request.

Mr. Slears stated that they would not change the name, but that they would propose a placard to give Choice Hotels recognition.

Commissioner Tyner stated that Choice Hotels would bring much needed economic development into the City.

The Commission and staff discussed deferral of the request.

Commissioner Trahan moved, seconded by Commissioner Ostell to deny the applicant's request to change East Middle Lane to Choice Hotel Lane. The motion passed on a vote of 4-2 with Commissioners Ostell, Trahan, Hadley, Callistein voting aye and Commissioners Tyner and Cook voting nay. Commissioner Hill was absent.

The Commission discussed other options that would not involve a street name change.

COMMISSION ITEMS

Rockville Pike Plan - update of worksessions and schedule

Mr. Levy provided an update on future Rockville Pike worksessions and meeting schedule.

Ms. Kebba discussed the upcoming April 27 worksession.

Mr. Levy discussed the Rockville Pike meeting schedule.

Adopt Updated Rules of Procedure

Ms. Waxman updated the Commission on the Rules of Procedure.

Commissioner Callistein moved, seconded by Commissioner Trahan to adopt the changes to N.5 in the Rules of Procedure. The motion passed on a vote of 6-0. Commissioner Hill was absent.

Ms. Waxman discussed Ex Parte Communications Guidelines. Ms. Waxman read the Guidelines into the record.

Commissioner Trahan moved, seconded by Commissioner Callistein to adopt the Ex Parte Communications Guidelines as proposed by the City's Legal Department and as a separate document for reference. The motion passed on a vote of 6-0. Commissioner Hill was absent.

Staff Liaison Report

Mr. Gunning stated that the next Planning Commission meeting is scheduled for April 27, 2011. The main item will be the Rockville Pike discussion.

Old Business

No Old Business

New Business

Mr. Trahan acknowledged the emails sent by Mr. Dan Slear and Mr. Max van Balgooy to the Commission regarding the street name change.

Minutes

Commissioner Trahan moved, seconded by Commissioner Ostell to approve the minutes of Meeting No. 5-2011 as submitted. The motion passed on a vote of 6-0. Commissioner Hill was absent.

Commissioner Trahan moved, seconded by Commissioner Callistein to approve the minutes of Meeting No. 6-2011 as submitted. The motion passed on a vote of 6-0. Commissioner Hill was absent.

Commissioner Trahan moved, seconded by Commissioner Cook to approve the minutes of Meeting No. 7-2011 as submitted. The motion passed on a vote of 6-0. Commissioner Hill was absent.

FYI Correspondence

No FYI Correspondence.

ADJOURN

The Chair adjourned the meeting at 12:00 midnight.

Respectfully Submitted,

Tyler Tansing, Commission Secretary